

Message Text

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ACTION SCA-01

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FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9688

INFO AMEMBASSY VIENNA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OCON, CGEN

SUBJECT: CONSULAR CONFERENCE

REF: STATE 057650

1. REFTELANNOUNCES THE FORTHCOMING CONSULAR CONFERENCE AND REQUESTS INFORMATION CONCERNING CONSULAR ISSUES WHICH ADDRESSEE POSTS WOULD LIKE TO HAVE DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING SCHEDULED FOR MAR 3 THROUGH 6 AT VIENNA. ALTHOUGH THE PROPOSED AGENDA CONTAINED REFTEL IS RATHER INCLUSIVE, TWO ADDITIONAL ITEMS WOULD BE OF INTEREST TO ATHENS. ONE RELATES TO THE INCREASING CONSULAR WORKLOAD VERSUS LIMITATIONS ON PERSONNEL, THE SECOND TO THE APPLICATION OF 212(A)(28) IN COUNTRIES SUCH AS GREECE WHERE POST WW II INTERNAL STRIFE TOOK THE FORM OF A COMMUNIST INSPIRED CIVIL WAR.

2. RE FIRST SUBJECT, THOSE OF FOREIGN SERVICE ASSIGNED TO CONSULAR RESPONSIBILITIES MUST BE CONCERNED WITH WORLDWIDE DRAMATIC INCREASE IN DEMAND FOR CONSULAR SERVICES, WHICH AT ATHENS HAS MEANT A DOUBLING IN NIV AND PASSPORT APPLICATIONS OVER THE PAST FIVE TO SIX YEARS, AND AN INCREASING REQUIREMENT FOR OFFICER TIME IN ASSISTING AMERICANS IN TROUBLE.

3. THROUGH VARIOUS MANAGERAIL EFFICIENCIES AND HARDWORK
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WE HAVE SO FAR AT ATHENS MANAGED TO COPE WITH THE RISING WORKLOAD, AND HAVE EXPANDED COVERAGE OF ARREST AND PRISON CASES, TOGETHER WITH OTHER WELFARE ACTIVITIES. IN DOING SO, HOWEVER, WE ARE VERY AWARE THAT QUALITY OF OPERATIONS, ESPECIALLY AS RELATED TO NIV APPLICATIONS MUST SUFFER, AS NUMBERS OF APPLICATIONS GO UP, AND TIME AVAILABLE FOR EACH APPLICATION CONTRACTS, OWING TO INABILITY TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF INTERVIEWING OFFICERS. WE

REALIZE OUR EXPERIENCE IS SHARED BY OTHER POSTS, AND IS OF CONCERN TO THE DEPARTMENT, GIVEN THE LARGE NUMBER OF ILLEGAL RESIDENTS NOW IN THE UNITED STATES, MANY OF WHOM PRESUMABLY APPLIED FOR AND RECEIVED NONIMMIGRANT VISAS UNDER FALSE PRETENCES. WE NOTE ALSO THAT IN RECENT A-1303 ALL POSTS WERE EXHORTED TO PROVIDE PERSONAL ATTENTION TO AMERICANS IN DIFFICULTIES, DRAWING ON PERSONNEL FROM OTHER UNITS AS NECESSARY. THE MEANS THROUGH WHICH THE DEPARTMENT AND FOREIGN SERVICE POSTS CAN WORK TOGETHER TO ENSURE ADEQUATE PERSONNEL FOR THESE INCREASING DEMANDS MIGHT WELL BE ADDRESSED DURING THE CONFERENCE.

4. A SECOND SUBJECT OF DISCUSSION WHICH ATHENS WOULD FIND OF INTEREST RELATES TO THE APPLICATION OF 212(A)(28) TO NIV AND IV APPLICANTS WHO SERVED WITH COMMUNIST FORCES DURING GREECE'S CIVIL WAR, OR WERE MEMBERS OF THE GREEK COMMUNIST PARTY DURING THE EARLY POST WAR PERIOD. NUMEROUS CASES COME TO THE EMBASSY'S ATTENTION INVOLVING SUCH INDIVIDUALS WHO NOW SEEK TO ENTER THE UNITED STATES TO REJOIN RELATIVES. IN MOST CASES THERE IS LITTLE OR NO EVIDENCE TO ASSOCIATE THE APPLICANT WITH COMMUNIST ACTIVITIES, SINCE HIS YOUTH, TWENTY-FIVE TO THIRTY YEARS AGO. ON THE OTHER HAND, IT IS DIFFICULT TO CONCLUDE THAT MEMBERSHIP WAS NON-MEANINGFUL WHEN MEMBERSHIP OCCURRED DURING A CIVIL WAR THAT SERIOUSLY THREATENED GREECE'S SURVIVAL AS A NON-COMMUNIST STATE. IN THE CASE OF NIV'S WE CAN AND DO SEEK WAIVERS AS APPROPRIATE. THERE IS OF COURSE NO SUCH ADMINISTRATIVE REMEDY FOR THE IV APPLICANT - PERHAPS THERE SHOULD BE.

5. ATHENS WOULD PROPOSE INCLUSION OF THESE TWO SUBJECTS ON THE AGENDA. THE ATHENS REPRESENTATIVE AT THE CONFERENCE WOULD OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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COURSE BE PREPARED TO ADDRESS EITHER OR BOTH SUBJECTS, IN LINE WITH THE SUGGESTION FOR POST PARTICIPATION, CONTAINED IN PARA 4 OR REFTEL.

6. THE EMBASSY'S DESIGNEE FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE CONFERENCE WILL BE NAMED LATER ON.
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